



State of Louisiana

Department of Environmental Quality



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M.J. "Mike" Foster
Governor

Contact Jim Friloux for more information: (225) 765-0735; e-mail: jim_f@deq.state.la.us

J. Dale Givens
Secretary

DEQ Continues to Monitor CITGO Refinery's Response to Industrial Testing Accident

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) continues to monitor and provide technical assistance to the CITGO Petroleum Corporation's Manufacturing Complex in Lake Charles, as the result of an accident involving radioactive materials which occurred on Friday, January 18, 2002. DEQ environmental specialists trained in radiation response arrived shortly after the accident and have been assisting the facility's staff in determining the extent of contamination and personnel exposure.

The incident involved an employee who was performing contract work. A contractor from Owensby and Kritikos (O&K) Inspection Services was inspecting welds in the refinery's alkylation unit utilizing a process similar to x-ray technology when his equipment failed, causing the radiation source to rupture.

CITGO's in-house emergency response personnel immediately sealed off the area, coordinated perimeter testing and established a decontamination area to protect personnel. In addition, CITGO has initiated steps to ensure immediate remediation of the site by hiring Duratek, Inc., a materials management response company, to remove the damaged inspection equipment. In order to provide expert technical assistance, CITGO has retained Dr. Max Scott, a health physicist at LSU.

DEQ will continue to investigate and gather information on the incident while monitoring the remediation of the site.

For further information, please contact Jim Friloux at (225) 765-0735.